

USCIS Transformation Solutions Architect Acquisition

Case Study: Communications in the Procurement Process



**Homeland
Security**

Description of Services to be Acquired

Excerpt from Statement of Objectives:

- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is in the process of *modernizing* its agency-wide business processes from a form-centric to person-centric model.
- The focus of the procurement is to acquire the services of an information technology contractor, referred to as the “Solutions Architect” (SA), to incrementally design, test, integrate, deploy, manage and operate and maintain an Integrated Operational Environment (IOE) to support the transformed business processes.

Pre-Solicitation

Solicitation

Evaluations and
Discussions

Award

Market Research Methods

Acquisition Strategy

Offeror Education

Pre-Solicitation

Solicitation

Evaluations and
Discussions

Award

Market Research Methods

- Engaged industry to determine potential strategies
- Issued Request for Information (RFI)
- Held one-on-one sessions with selected companies
- Issued draft solicitation to solicit further comments

Pre-Solicitation

Solicitation

Evaluations and
Discussions

Award

Two-Step Procurement

- FAR 16 Fair Opportunity
- Solicited 27 EAGLE primes

Phase 1

- Conceptual Solution and Relevant Experience
- Rough Order of Magnitude
- Oral presentations

Phase 2

- Funded Due Diligence Process
- Full Tech/Cost Proposal

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Due Diligence Process for all three Offerors

– Panel Discussions

- Key stakeholders of the Transformation Program (e.g. IT panels, Human Capital panel, Privacy and Security Panel, etc.)
- Senior Leadership

– One-on-One Discussions

- Opportunity for Offerors to ask questions of the panel members without competitors present.

– Site visits to Operational Business Locations

- Service Centers, National Records Center, National Benefits Center, etc. (Mexico City, Mexico, Southern California, Dallas, Texas, and St. Louis, Missouri)

Total Process took three Months

Pre-Solicitation

Solicitation

**Evaluations and
Discussions**

Award

Proposal Submissions

- Cost and technical proposals were submitted upon completion of due diligence process

Discussions

- Technical and management discussions about approach
- Cost discussions to ensure all technical offerings were included to ensure realism

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Solicitation

Evaluations and
Discussions

Award

- Award was made to IBM on November 3, 2008 in the amount of \$491,097,843.
- Debriefings were conducted for the two unsuccessful offerors
- A GAO protest was filed by one offeror. The protest was withdrawn the day before GAO was planning to dismiss it.

Busting Myths – *How we fared*

OFPP Myth Busting Memo - Misconceptions about Vendor Communications

✓	1.	"We can't meet one-on-one with a potential offeror"
✓	3.	"A protest is something to be avoided at all costs - even if it means the government limits conversations with industry."
✓	4.	"Conducting discussions/negotiations after receipt of proposals will add too much time to the schedule."
✓	5.	"If the government meets with vendors, that may cause them to submit an unsolicited proposal and that will delay the procurement process."
✓	7.	"Industry days and similar events attended by multiple vendors are of low value to industry and the government because industry won't provide useful information in front of competitors, and the government doesn't release new information."
✓	8.	"The program manager already talked to industry to develop the technical requirements, so the contracting officer doesn't need to do anything else before issuing the RFP."
✓	9.	"Giving industry only a few days to respond to an RFP is OK since the government has been talking to industry about this procurement for over a year."
✓	10.	"Getting broad participation by many different vendors is too difficult; we're better off dealing with the established companies we know."